A Synopsis

On

A Comparative Study of Consumer Behavior Towards Over-The-Top (OTT) Subscription Models: A Case Study of Ranchi District

For

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INTRODUCTION

Consumers make buying decisions based on level of satisfaction they get from a particular product or service. A rational consumer always tries to maximise the satisfaction out of total consumption. Satisfied consumers have greater tendency to repeat the purchase and remain loyal whereas dissatisfied consumers look for alternatives and easily switch over. Humans are social animals. They always look for new ways of entertainment. Role of consumer in entertainment industry goes beyond revenue generating targets. In the present era, consumer contribute to every section of supply chain of content in the entertainment industry.

There was a time when people used to wait for their favorite shows to be telecasted or released in movie theatres. In that era of Cable TV and Direct-To-Home (DTH) satellite connection service, viewers had to depend upon the middlemen such as cable TV distributors, and DTH companies (Tata Play, Dish TV, Videocon, Sun Direct, etc.) to watch programs on TV channels.

The traditional entertainment industry which suffered from problems like poor cable service, monotonous content & plethora of advertisements, etc. has made people rapidly migrate to Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms which contained a promising future for the entertainment industry with a variety of content and fewer advertisements. With the introduction of 4G in India and easy and low-priced internet access, it became possible for viewers to watch content directly on the digital platform without any involvement of the middlemen. Going over the middlemen and delivering content directly to the consumers make them '***over the top***'. The shift of consumers' viewing preference from traditional media to online content is attracting big-budget producers and directors to release movies and shows directly on OTT. The OTT platforms are producing original content to stay ahead of their competitors and recently, Big-Budget movies and shows are being released on OTT.

In a broad sense, OTT can be termed as any information, entertainment content, service, or application that is provided to end users over an open internet connection rather than using a satellite service or cable connection. It refers to the delivery of video, audio, and other media content over the Internet.

According to the OTT market research report published by **The International Market Analysis Research and Consulting (IMARC) Group, 2023, Report Description**[1]**,** The OTT market is expected to reach US$ 3400 billion by 2023. The growing penetration of high-speed internet, widespread adoption of smart devices, sudden shift towards on-demand content, evolving monetization models are some major factors propelling the market.

It has emerged as a new digital multi-media platform where the cable operator or direct broadcast satellite television does not distribute or control the content people watch. The viewers have complete

autonomy over choosing the type and amount of content they want to watch and the amount they want to pay for it.

When the users first dive into the world of OTT platforms, they are allured to the vast library of free content. This strategy by the service providers of online content allows them to acquire a large user base quickly and efficiently. Moreover, consumers may be hesitant to pay the subscription charges before fully exploring the content offered by a particular OTT platform.

Ad-based OTT platforms mimic traditional television by playing ads during a show. As consumers are already accustomed to constant advertisements in their viewing experience on television, they have no problem with occasional ad - interruptions in exchange for the free content.

As the users become more acquainted with the OTT platforms, they start noticing the limitations of ad-based OTT platforms. The frequent interruption by ads during content consumption disrupts the viewing experience, especially during crucial moments in a show, leading to frustration and diminished enjoyment. The range of content available in ad-based OTT platforms is limited compared to other models. OTT platforms are investing heavily in producing exclusive shows and movies to attract and retain consumers. These original productions are often critically acclaimed, making them a compelling reason for the consumers to consider moving to subscription-based models. The perception of getting a superior and more diverse content library can outweigh the appeal of free content with ads.

1.1 Theoretical framework of Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour is the sum of consumer's perception, attitude, preference, and the decision while making a purchase of a product or a service. Every consumer has a distinct purchase pattern. It is a psychological procedure where consumers select, receive, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to fulfil their needs, wants, goals as well as the effects of their actions on the society.

Stages of consumer buying process

1. **Problem Recognition**

   This is the first stage of consumer buying process when the consumer recognises the difference between the desired and actual condition.

2. **Information search**

   At this stage, the consumer starts gathering information either internally through memory or externally through word of mouth, public sources etc. A successful information search leaves a buyer with possible alternatives that can satisfy the desire.

3. **Evaluation of Alternatives**

   At this stage, consumer establishes criteria for evaluation of alternatives then assigns weight or rank to them. If dissatisfied with the result, the consumer returns to the 2nd stage.

4. **Purchase decision**

   After evaluating the alternatives, the consumer takes the decision related to product, package, store, method of purchase, price etc.

5. **Post-Purchase Evaluation**

   Finally, the consumer will decide that the purchase provided satisfaction or not. The satisfied consumer shows greater tendency to purchase the same product and leave positive reviews. A dissatisfied consumer may leave negative review of the product or service.[2]

Theories of consumer buying behaviour

1. **Theory of Reasoned Action**

   This theory suggests that a person's behavior is determined by their intention to perform the behavior. The best predictor of behavior is the belief that the behavior will lead to the intended outcome. The more favorable the attitude and the subjective norms, the stronger a person's intention to perform such behavior.

2. **Howard-Sheth Model**

   It suggests that the buyer's decision-making process is highly rational and methodical. It includes three levels of decision making – extensive problem solving, limited problem solving, and habitual response behaviour.

3. **Pavlovian Model**

   This theory suggests that through repeated association of stimulus and reward, an automatic response occur. It focuses on the effects of pre-existing stimuli on consumers.

4. **Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model**

   It says that consumers make decisions based on influencing factors that they assess through rational insights. The model outlines a five-stage decision process – awareness, information processing, evaluation, purchase decision and outcome analysis.

5. **Hawkins-Stern Impulse Buying**

   It is an alternative to Learning model and EKB. It claims that purchases aren't always a result of rational thought. This theory categorizes impulse buying into four types – escape purchase, reminder purchase, suggested purchase, and planned impulse purchase.

6. **Black Box Model**

   Black box model or Stimulus-Response model says that consumers are individual thinkers that process internal and external stimuli to make purchase decisions. They make decisions after judging whether a product will satisfy the need or belief.

7. **Bettman's information processing model of consumer choice**

   In this model, consumers are assumed to possess a limited capacity for processing the information and they are not interested in extensive research before taking the decision.Therefore, they typically take simple decision strategies.

Types of Consumer Buying Behavior

1. **Complex buying behavior**

   Complex buying behavior is encountered particularly when consumers are buying an expensive product and there are significant differences among brands. They research thoroughly before committing to invest. When the risk of buying a product is very high, a consumer consults friends, family, and experts before making the decision.

2. **Dissonance-reducing buying behavior**

   This behavior can be seen when the high prices and infrequent purchases are involved and there are limited alternatives with lower significant difference available in the market that the consumers must choose from. Consumers buy certain products without much research based on availability, budget limitation, and time constraint.

3. **Habitual buying behavior**

   When consumers are buying products that they use for their daily routine, they either buy their favorite brand, or the one they use regularly, or the one easily available in the store, or the cheapest one.

4. **Variety seeking behavior**

   In this type, involvement of consumer is very low. There are significant differences in various brands of the same product and the substitution cost is very low. Here, consumers buy different products not because of dissatisfaction, but mainly due to an urge to seek variety.

5. **Impulse purchase**

   In this type, consumers make purchase with no prior thought or planning involved. It mostly happens with low-cost items.

Factors influencing consumer behavior

1. **Marketing Factors**

   Factors like uniqueness of the product, price, publicity, etc have potential to influence buying behavior of consumers.

2. **Personal Factors**

   Consumers preferences varies across age, gender, education, income level, social status, lifestyle, family size etc.

3. **Psychological Factors**

   Consumers' buying behaviour may be affected by the experience they get after using a product or service. It also depends upon the purpose of purchase, perception and attitude, thoughts and beliefs, trust in a brand etc.

4. **Situational Influences**

   It includes physical location, social surroundings, time factor, and mood of the consumer that affect the buying decision-making of the consumer.

5. **Social Factors**

   Family background of the consumer, social status goods, and reference groups such as colleagues, neighbors, friends, etc influence and sometimes create pressure for a consumer to buy certain goods of certain brands.

6. **Cultural Factors**

   Cultural values, race, religion, caste, moral values, social government, geographical regions, etc have great influence over buying behaviour of consumers.

1.2 Background of OTT in India

In 2008, Reliance Entertainment launched Big Flix, the first OTT platform in India on a Video-on-demand basis. The consumers had to pay for each movie before they could download it to watch. The growth of OTT in India began after 2013 when Ditto Tv and SonyLIV were launched in the country where people could watch live and recorded TV shows. After two years, Hotstar, now known as Disney+ Hotstar, was launched and is now one of India's most popular OTT platforms.

The year 2016 marked a significant impact on the growth of OTT. It was the year when a few major developments surged the OTT market: first, the entry of Netflix and Amazon Prime in the Indian market, and second, the launch of Jio 4G Network by Reliance Industries which offered free data and voice service until March 2017. Initially, no-cost data and later low-cost data and affordable smartphones gained a large audience base for OTT platforms. Later, many OTT platforms were launched in India viz. Voot, Eros Now, Viu, Jio TV, MX Player, and many more.

1.3 Covid-19 And OTT Entertainment Platforms in India

The Covid-19 pandemic had a profound impact on OTT platforms in India. The pandemic forced people to stay at home due to lockdown and restrictions. Stuck inside their houses during the lockdown, people across the world turned to the screens to seek entertainment, leading to significant changes in their behavior, content consumption patterns, and overall growth of the OTT industry. The entertainment industry was also massively hit by the lockdown and all the ongoing production projects were put to a halt leading to a deficit of fresh content on televisions and theatres. The theatres were shut and television channels were playing reruns of the old shows. **Sharma, K., (2020)**[3] in her article mentioned that the multiplexes had to shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the production houses had to release their production directly onto OTT Platforms. It was a win-win situation for both OTT players who needed fresh content as well as for the filmmakers who had their production ready but were unable to release. It forced consumers to look for alternatives and the OTT platforms which offered an abundance of original national as well as international content at affordable prices proved itself as a promising entertainment replacement for the traditional media.
OTT gained popularity during the pandemic and now, post-covid, quality content creation and consumer retention is a challenge for the OTT industry. Sharma, K., (2020), predicted the possibility of a surge in multiplex services when things become normal after the pandemic.

Following are some points that depict the effect of covid-19 on OTT platforms in India:

1. **Surge in viewership**

   The closure of theatres & TV serial shooting locations, and restricted outdoor activities of people during lockdown prompted a surge in the viewership of OTT platforms, as an alternative to the television telecasting either repeated episodes of a show or nothing. Through OTT, people were able to watch national as well as international content on their electronic devices like smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, etc.

2. **Release of Big - Budget films directly on OTT**

   With theatres closed, several film producers chose to release their already finished production directly on OTT. This trend of 'direct-to-digital' or 'OTT release' provided a wide reach for the films and allowed filmmakers to recover their investments despite the closure of theatres**.**

3. **Growth of regional content**

   People during lockdown sought content in their native languages which led to the rise of regional OTT platforms like OHO Gujarati, Planet Marathi, Hoichoi, etc. in India. This increased the focus on producing more regional-language content in India.

4. **Increase in original-content production** - With the surge in viewership and demand for fresh content, OTT platforms ramped up their investments in in-home production of original web series, movies, documentaries, etc. to keep the audience engaged and entertained to gain the maximum first-mover advantage.
5. **Virtual premiers and Online events** - OTT platforms organised virtual meetings, press conferences, online interviews, and live interaction with actors, filmmakers & influencers, etc. to promote their content and keep the audience engaged.
6. **Technological upgradation** - OTT platforms had to scale up their infrastructure to accommodate the increased traffic and to ensure a smooth viewing experience for the users. They adopted new technologies such as bitrate streaming, offline downloads, etc.
7. **Shift in the advertisement** - The advertisers experienced a huge change in advertising patterns due to uncertainties during the lockdown. They either paused their campaign or shifted to ad-based OTT platforms, as they seemed promising.

1.4 Traditional Media Vs OTT

Traditional media includes every media that existed before the internet. It includes all forms of communication such as print media like newspapers, magazines, and books, broadcast media such as television & radio, and outdoor advertisements like billboards & posters, etc. Before digitalization took over, traditional media was the primary source of communication and was used to spread information and entertainment but as the internet gained popularity, the use of traditional media has decreased over the years. Before the internet era, traditional media such as television, had a wide coverage area that stretched from a city to a whole nation. It catered to a wide audience with diverse interests from entertainment to news and sports within a geographical area. The distribution of content was done according to the target audience. Only a few media platforms targeted consumers worldwide unlike many digital media that targeted only niche markets, confining to only a particular area **Logan, R. (2010)**[4]. The traditional media lacked interaction i.e., it did not have a two-way communication process. The broadcasters could only send out information but unlike online platforms where it is very easy to get feedback through comments, likes reviews and emails, etc., With time, the traditional media realized the need to change its perspective and now, a wide range of producers are producing a wider range of news, sports, and entertainment content. Traditional media dominated the market and significantly earned prestige and credibility for their journalism. Most of these traditional media platforms hire professionals who enhance their work with their expertise and they also get special training in print or broadcast media. Creation of audio-visual content, getting them printed or broadcasted and it is marketing required a king-size budget and they had to wait for quite some time to know the response of consumers after the release in any market. The traditional media market has

been on a decline, but they continue to exist and have sway. They are also gradually adopting the changes brought by technology and shifting to the OTT market.

1.5 Buying behavior process of consumers on OTT video platforms

As discussed earlier, consumer buying behaviour is a series of steps that a consumer adopts after consideration of various factors related to online media consumption. A consumer's buying behavior process includes awareness or recognition of the problem, Information search, alternative search & evaluation, decision-making and post–purchase evaluation.

1. **Awareness**

   The source of awareness about OTT platforms are advertisements, social media, internet, and recommendations from friends etc. **Vahoniya et al., (2022)**[5] in the study concluded that recommendations from friends and relatives were the source of awareness of OTT platforms.

2. **Information search**

   When the viewers become aware of available online media platforms, they start seeking information on the content library and types of subscriptions offered by different OTT platforms.

3. **Evaluation**

   After gathering information, the consumers compare these OTT platforms by considering various factors such as content quantity & quality, user experience, device compatibility, cost of subscription, video resolution, etc. that align with their interests.

4. **Decision-Making**

   After evaluation of various OTT platforms, consumers choose one or multiple OTT platforms based on their preference and affordability.

5. **Post-purchase evaluation**

   After subscribing to one or multiple OTT platforms, viewers start consuming online content and comparing their actual experience with their expectations. There can be two outcomes- satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Dissatisfied customers may leave negative comments, discontinue their subscription, and start looking for alternatives. Satisfied customers may interact with the platforms by creating watchlist, rating, advocating for these OTT platforms, making recommendations, and leaving positive reviews online, etc.

   Some customers may join online communities, discussion, user forums etc. Viewers may also provide valuable feedbacks to OTT platforms through surveys, customer support etc which can help the platforms improving their content offerings and delivery.

1.6 Monetization Models of OTT Platforms / Type of Subscriptions on OTT

1. **AVOD Model** – The Advertising-Based-Video on Demand (AVOD) Model provides free content, but viewers must watch ads on the platform. This is best for market entry-level platforms to attract a large audience for them. Its services are completely based on the internet and content cannot be accessible offline. Users who do not want to spend money prefer watching free content and they are least bothered by the ads in the videos. These ads can generate greater revenue for the OTT platforms if operated at a large scale. Many sports platforms use this model to let the viewers enjoy the match without paying a single buck. The most successful examples are YouTube, Tubi, Roku, Pluto TV, Jio TV etc.
2. **SVOD Model -** The Subscription-Based-Video on Demand (SVOD) Model provides access to all content available on a particular OTT platform for which viewers need to pay a monthly fee or annual subscription charge. This model is very similar to traditional television packages, allowing users to enjoy as much content as they desire at a flat rate per month. The users are not tied into a long-term contract, as a monthly plan gives the users the flexibility to opt out any time they want. This is the most popular revenue model among OTT media providers and most of the popular platforms use this model. The content providers under this model face fierce competition. Retaining consumers is a big challenge for them, for which they continuously need exclusive new content or aggressive pricing schemes, and sometimes both. The most popular OTT platforms using this model are Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Disney+Hotstar, Apple etc.
3. **TVOD Model -** The Transactional-Video on Demand Model (TVOD) or Pay-Per-View model provides access to only those shows or movies on an OTT platform, for which the consumers have exclusively paid a fixed amount. There are two sub-categories – first, the Electronic Sell-Through (EST) i.e., permanent access to a piece of content in a one-time payment and second, the Download To Rent (DTR) i.e., access to content for a limited time for a smaller fee. This model is best for the high-in-demand latest and exclusive content. In that way, it can provide higher revenues for the right holders and the consumers get timely access to new content. TVOD services offer attractive price incentives to retain consumers. Examples of OTT platforms using this model include Sky Box Office,ZEEPlex, BookMyShow Stream, Shemaroo Entertainment's ShemarooMe Box Office, FanCode, and Epic On etc.
4. **Hybrid Model** – This model combines the above models and makes a new one. The hybrid may be 'AVOD + SVOD' in which the OTT platforms provide ad-supported free content and to watch ad-free content, consumers need to pay for a subscription. Another combination may

be ‘SVOD + TVOD’ in which the consumers are required to pay a minimum subscription fee and to watch blockbuster movies or shows or exclusive new content, they need to pay an extra fee. The service providers, by this model, generate revenue both from subscription as well as advertisements. As the OTT industry reaches maturing stage, using one model for revenue generation will be inadequate. Many platforms like Disney+ and sports platforms are adopting hybrid mode for revenue generation. Examples of OTT platforms using this model include Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, Rakuten Viki, etc. Amazon Prime used this model for quite some time.

1.7 Major Players of OTT Platforms Nationwide

Following are some of the most popular OTT Platforms in India[7]-

1. **Netflix**

It is an American video-on-demand OTT streaming service that offers films and television series from various genres in multiple languages. In January 2007, the company launched a streaming media service, introducing video on demand via the Internet. With over 232 million paid memberships in more than 190 countries, it is the most-subscribed video-on-demand streaming service all over the world. Netflix first launched in India in 2016 and is now one of the most popular streaming services in the country. It offers a wide variety of content in India viz. Bollywood movies, Hollywood movies, TV shows, and documentaries. It is one of the few streaming services that offer 4K Ultra HD content in India.

2. **Amazon Prime Video**

Amazon Prime Video or Prime Video is an American subscription video-on-demand OTT streaming and rental service of Amazon that provides a standalone service as well as a part of Amazon’s Prime Subscription. Its services include television & film distribution produced in-house by Amazon Studios, MGM Holdings, or licensed as Amazon Originals. It also distributes contents from other providers, live sporting events, video rentals, purchasing videos, content add on, etc. In India, it was launched in the year 2016 as subscription-based video-on-demand.

3. **Disney+ Hotstar**

Disney+ Hotstar, previously Hotstar, is an Indian subscription video on-demand over-the-top streaming service owned by The Walt Disney Company India and operated by Disney Streaming, featuring domestic Indian film, television and sport content for India itself and its worldwide diaspora.

Launched in the year 2015 in India after 15 months of development, the brand was first introduced as Hotstar, a streaming service carrying ad-supported content in seven regional languages as well as content from Disney Star's local networks, including films, television series, live sports,

and original programming, as well as featuring content licensed from third-parties. Following the acquisition of its parent company by Disney in the year 2019, Hotstar became Disney+ Hotstar. Amid the significant growth of mobile broadband in India, it quickly became the dominant streaming service and now it is the *most subscribed* OTT platform in the country.

4. Zee5

Zee5 is an Indian subscription video on-demand and over-the-top streaming service, run by Zee Entertainment Enterprises. It was launched in India on 14 February 2018 with content including exclusive originals, Indian and international movies and TV shows, music, live television, health and lifestyle videos in 12 regional languages.

Ozee was an Indian digital online platform that was launched in February 2016 by Zee Entertainment Enterprises which, along with another subscription based DittoTV, was subsumed by Zee5. It has a mix of both free and premium content across 18 languages. Except for premium content, all other content which are ad-supported, can be enjoyed without paying any charges. Purchasing a Zee5 subscription gives ad-free access to all the content on it.

5. SonyLIV

SonyLIV is a freemium (free & premium) over-the-top streaming platform launched in the year 2013 by Culver Max Entertainment. As a streaming service in 10 regional languages, it carries content from its local networks, including films, television series, live sports matches and live TV programs, and also features content licensed from third-parties in India. Since 2020, SonyLIV has been producing and distributing both films and television series, offering original content for its viewers.

6. Voot

It is an Indian subscription based as well as ad-supported video on-demand streaming service. It was launched in India by Viacom18 in 2014 as ad-supported free video contents from channels like MTV, Nickelodeon and Colors in multiple regional languages. Subscription-based service (Voot Select) was introduced in the year 2020 for streaming Voot's original series as well as selected TV shows a day before they were programmed to be telecasted in the TV channels.

In the year 2022, sports content was transferred to its sister company, JioCinema.

7. JIO Cinema

Owned by Reliance Industries, Jio Cinema was initially launched with the public launch of the Jio Network in 2016 and was available exclusively for Jio users along with other Jio apps like Jio TV, JioNews, Saavn etc. Its content library includes films, television shows, web series, music videos, documentaries, and sports. In April 2022, on account of heavy inflow of investments to boost the online streaming business in Viacom 18, a joint venture of Paramount Global and Reliance Industries, it was announced that as a part of the deal, Jio Cinema would be brought

under Viacom18. As mentioned above, in the year 2022, Viacom 18 moved the sports content from its already existing streaming platform 'Voot' to Jio Cinema, with all the World Cup matches streaming for free. Recently, it has launched a premium tier, anchored by content agreement with national and international media & entertainment.

8. EROS NOW

Eros Now is an Indian subscription-based over-the-top, video on-demand entertainment and media platform, launched in 2012. It is owned and controlled by Eros Digital, the Indian digital media management arm of the Indian-American multinational media company Eros Media World. The network offers media streaming and video-on-demand services. The VOD content this OTT platform provides are free or ad-supported, subscription based, rental or purchase based, television programs and sports. In the initial launch phase, Eros Now started with films and music videos as its primary content. Later it added content such as short films, web-series and specially curated content under the '*originals'* bouquet. It has also tied- up with various leading telecom and content players to stay ahead of the curve.

9. ALTBalaji

ALTBalaji was launched as an Indian subscription-based video-on-demand OTT platform by Balaji Telefilms in the year 2017 which is available in multiple regional languages and various interface for its viewers. It offers original in house produced content in various genres like drama, mystery, romance, thrillers, comedy etc.

10. MXPlayer

MXPlayer is an Indian ad-supported video-on-demand OTT platform launched in the year 2019 by MX Media & Entertainment Pte Ltd. It has original as well as licensed content from various Indian and International Studios. It was initially available only in India, but in 2020, it expanded its services to select international markets.

11. YouTube Premium

YouTube Premium, formerly Music Key and YouTube Red, is a subscription-based service offered by the American video platform YouTube. It was originally launched on November 14, 2014, as Music Key, offering advertisement-free streaming of music videos from participating labels on YouTube and Google Play Music. The service was then revised and relaunched as YouTube Red on October 31, 2015, expanding its scope to offer advertisement-free access to all YouTube videos, as opposed to just music. To compete against other OTT Platforms, it started production and distribution of original content (YouTube Originals) as part of the subscription service as well as ad-supported free content. Thus, the service now provides ad-free access to music and other video content on YouTube, as well as access to premium YouTube

Originals programming produced in collaboration with the site's creators, downloading videos and background playback of videos on mobile devices, and access to the music streaming service.

12. JIO TV

It is an Indian live television channel online streaming service as well as catch up content to end consumers. Owned by Jio, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries, Jio TV was launched in the year 2016. It has partnered with different broadcasting companies such as ABP Group, Zee, Culver Max etc. to provide content in different categories from news to entertainment and sports. Various government education channels such as 'Swayam Prabha' also runs in Jio Tv. According to Kalagato report on OTT in 2018, Jio saw around 18% of active users and in terms of market share, it holds 24% nationally.

1.8 Factors affecting the growth of OTT entertainment platforms

1. **Internet Penetration** - Access to high-speed internet is a significant factor in the growth of OTT. In India, a large population is living in rural area without proper internet infrastructure. As more people gain internet connectivity, the potential audience for online content will increase, leading toa large customer base for OTT services.
2. **Affordable data plans** - In emerging markets, affordable data plans make it possible for the users to spend more time on OTT without the fear of data exhaustion. It increases user engagement and content consumption on OTT platforms.
3. **Original & Diverse Content** - OTT platforms offer a wide range of content, catering to a diverse audiences' interests & preferences. From TV shows, movies, documentaries, sports to regional content. The Original series, movies and documentaries not only attract new subscribers but also encourage existing users to stay connected to the platform.
4. **Technological factors** - OTT platform handles high- resolution video data. To operate these platforms, more efficient hardware supply is required. To handle multiple versions that are generated, more storage is required. To manage high-capacity fibre connection, special IP switches & network connectivity are needed and to manage all the above, more power is required.
5. **Convenience and Flexibility** - OTT platforms offer flexibility to the users to watch content on-demand, allowing them to consume content at their convenience. Additionally, features like offline downloads and multiple device compatibility further enhance the user experience, leading to increased adoption.
6. **Content Partnerships and Licensing** - Collaborations with content creators, production houses, and distribution partners have enabled OTT platforms to secure a vast library of

content. These partnerships ensure a steady stream of new and popular content, keeping users engaged and subscribed to the service. Geo- restrictions and content licensing strategies need to comply with the regional regulations to secure rights to distribute content indifferent locations.

7. **Monetization Model or Sources of funds** - Each OTT platform serves a different kind of audience and a dynamic revenue can appeal to most of the consumers. It has been seen that in emerging markets, the OTT service providers choose AOD based monetization models but as the market grows, they also shift their revenue model to other types of monetisation models.
8. **Distribution and marketing** - Effective content distribution ensures that OTT platforms reach a large audience. OTT service providers need to create user-friendly apps, compatible with various types of devices like smartphone, tablet, Smart TV etc and with different operating systems. For marketing, targeted marketing or niche marketing campaigns should be adopted to attract specific audiences.
9. **Consumer segmentation or target audience** - Targeted marketing campaign can lead to higher conversion rates and increased subscriber acquisition, fuelling the expansion of OTT market. Consumer segmentation can also help OTT platforms in Identifying underserved markets. The providers can attract a massive passionate audience in these underserved or niche markets by developing content and features tailored specifically for these segments.
10. **Government Policy** - The OTT platforms in India have even opted for self-regulation code which laid down a specific framework for OTT service providers in 2020. An excessive number of guidelines can influence creative freedom which can have a great impact on viewership on these platforms. A correct set of guidelines is necessary to control the bad influence of OTT platforms especially on youth. For instance, as per the new guidelines issued by the government recently, the OTT platforms need to self-classify the age-related content, provide a mechanism of parental lock, grievance-redressal mechanism etc.
11. **Competition among various OTT platforms** - The OTT operators need to be proactive in dealing with competition. They can differentiate from competitors by offering unique and exclusive content and focusing on enhancing user experience with features like customisable and personalized recommendations, easy to use interface etc. Building a loyal customer base by providing excellent customer services, partnership & collaborations with other business firms, investing in marketing & advertising to promote, raise awareness about the platform, staying up to date with new industry trends and emerging technologies can boost the OTT business.

1.9 Financial & Economic Impact of OTT

OTT video platforms have a significant impact on India both economically and financially. The emerging OTT video industry has brought financial benefits to various sectors. Significant revenue is being generated through subscription fees, advertising etc. According to a report by Statista, India earned more than 1.8 billion U.S. dollars from OTT in the year 2022 and is estimated to increase to approximately3.52 billion U.S. dollars by the year 2027 (fig).

Source: Statista, 2023[8]

According to Business Today[9], OTT market dominated by Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+Hotstar is estimated to double the revenue from $1.8 billion in 2022 to $3.5 billion by 2027. Investment in original content production as well as regional content production is being made to cater to Indian audiences. According to Economic Times[10] market estimates, top OTT players have made investments of approximately $700 million on original content production in the year 2022. Content creators can monetize their intellectual property through copyright, licensing, etc. This has also forced traditional media players to adapt and offer better service in reduced prices. OTT platforms requires internet connection to be accessed. Therefore, telecom companies are also investing to improve their infrastructure to meet the demand for high-speed internet. The demand for international content and entry of global OTT players have increased the competition. The affordable subscription and high-resolution content can reduce piracy, to preserve revenue for actual content creators and platforms.

OTT video platforms are evolving and it will play even more prominent role in India's economic prosperity. Unemployment is a critical issue for India. The demand for original content increased the demand for actors, writers, directors, producers, technical crew etc, creating job opportunities in considerable amount. Moreover, it has also increased job opportunities in post-production, marketing, promotion industries. The demand for regional content in various Indian languages has boosted the employment opportunities regionally. Regional filmmakers as well as independent filmmakers also got opportunities to showcase their work through OTT platforms leading to more income generation and job creation. According to CII-BCG Report[11], due to rise in digital content consumption, robust

internet and smartphone penetration, India's media & entertainment industry is expected to grow at 11-12%.

PROFILE OF RANCHI DISTRICT

Ranchi district is the capital city of Jharkhand and is governed by Municipal Corporation. According to 2011 Census[12] It is the most populous district of the state with a population of 29,14,253. The total urban population of Ranchi district is 12,57,335 out of which 52.04 % are male and rest are female. 43.14% of the population lives in urban area. Sex ratio is 949 females per 1000 males. The average literacy rate of the district is 76.06% out of which 84.26% are male literates. The child population between zero to six years of age was estimated to be 4,01,214 who at present constitute the young population between 24 to 30 years of age. In the district, the percentage of total working population is 39.22% and 60.78% are non-workers. The main source of employment & income is agriculture. The economy of the district mainly depends on cultivation or related work. More than 51% of the total workers are engaged in Primary sector. Only 45.46% population is engaged in work other than agriculture.

Ranchi city is growing and expanding rapidly and has undergone major changes since 2011. Easily available manpower, reputed technical, management and educational institutions, transport and communication facilities are attracting the entrepreneurs and efforts are being made to generate ample employment. The city is rich in natural and mineral resources so there is enormous potential for industrialization in the city. Ranchi is a hub of many prestigious educational institutions.

Increasing literacy and employment rate also implies improvement in the standard of living of people. Many malls and parks are being set up with entertainment and recreational activities. There are 10 multiplex & cinema halls, more than 40 cable operators 6 DTH companies in Ranchi. The digital industry is also growing very fast with the technological upgradation, better communication networks & connectivity, availability of low-cost smart gadgets. People of the city are also viewing OTT contents creating opportunities for research in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gupta Pramit, (2021)[13] - In this study, it has been mentioned that the increase in the number of devices that support OTT platforms, the rise in the number of internet and mobile data subscribers, increase in demand for both 'Produced-for-TV' as well as exclusive freshly brewed content have provided the OTT platforms to emerge as the trending sector in media and entertainment industry. The viewers have complete autonomy over choosing the content and pricing, keeping in mind the exact type of amount and content they want to view. In his study, he found that youngsters prefer web series in contrast to middle and old agers preferring TV serials. Most people shifted to OTT because of its accessibility anywhere, anytime as well as the superiority of its content over TV series. According to a report published by **Business Wire**[14] in Oct 2021, the global digital video content market is forecast to grow by $327.19 billion (₹27.05 trillion appx.) during 2021-25, progressing at a CAGR (Compound annual growth rate is an annual growth rate of an investment over a specified period of more than a year) of 14% during the forecast period.

Awasya et.al., (2021)[15] - The study was conducted to analyse the impact of the new trends of OTT video streaming platform's viewership in lockdown, to assess the future of the collective watching experience in India, and to analyse the attitude of Indian people towards cinema halls by assessing different factors that indicate the shifts in the watching experience. This study concluded that during the lockdown OTT turned out to be the most convenient and accessible technology. This study also concluded that OTT will continue to spread its feet and it is going to have a huge impact in terms of viewership and it will be very difficult for the viewers to go back to the cinema hall and watch movies like before.

T. Haritha et.al., (2021)[16] - The study aimed to analyse the forthcoming revolution of entertainment service i.e., over-the-top (OTT). This study found that on OTT, consumers prefer to watch movies more than the series. The study highlighted that the consumers' highest preference among all OTT platforms is Hotstar. This study also concluded that the quality of content and affordable cost are the factors that attract customers to the OTT platform.

Raj Apporv et. Al., (2021)[17] - OTT platforms will continue to spread in India and will have a significant impact in terms of viewership on the traditional mediums such as television and multiplexes. The future footfalls of multiplexes and televisions will undoubtedly be influenced by OTT platform services. OTT platform services will be regarded as the technology of the future, having a significant impact on our collective viewing habits.

Gupta Garima et.al., (2021)[18] - The study examined the impact of two key antecedents, namely, Customer Engagement (CE) and Quality of Service Experience (QoSE) for their impact on users' willingness to Continue and Subscribe (WCS) streaming services in the future with the help of Partial

Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLSSEM) analysis. The paper also delved into the indirect role of satisfaction and habit in affecting the aforesaid linkages.

Shon et.al., (2021)[19] - This study examined the impact of global OTT platforms on the local video content industry in South Korea and the impact of YouTube and Netflix on the efficiency of the domestic content production & distribution industry through Stochastic Frontier Analysis, Tobit Analysis, And Meta-Frontier Analysis. Through this study, it was confirmed that the effect of technological development and entry of global OTT platforms are significant and varies depending upon the entered platform.

Nijhawan G, (2020)[20] - The researcher studied the evolution of OTT space in India with the first big-banner movie release on platforms like Amazon, Netflix, return of old content like mythological programmes from DD era on Hotstar, etc. In this study, the researcher tried to evaluate the role played by pandemic in evolving OTT media consumption treads., a qualitative mapping of increase in OTT adoption - Pre & Post Covid in India. It was concluded that a common family television enabled with limited channels restricted the imagination of young India. This imagination was tapped and explored by OTT players optimally during Covid -19 and the flexibility of accessing a range of content on personal devices such as smartphones & tablets gave young India freedom to watch what they desired.

Nirmal Shruti, (2022)[21] - In this study, it has been mentioned that the OTT platforms were priorly seen as a metro trend, but now it seems as a nationwide trend with new customers coming from beyond metros. The figure in the increment of the number of OTT service providers has increased a lot. There were only two OTT platforms in 2012, and now there are many.

HT, (2022)[22] - This article predicted that by the end of 2023, 85 percent of Indian customers will be Internet-ready. The age group 35-44 years is the subscription paying group on OTT. India will experience enormous growth in OTT subscribers by 2023. The number is estimated to attain upto 500 million users. One of the major reasons for the spread of OTT globally is its ease of use. Only a high-speed Internet connection and a supported device is needed. However, the growth was visible in the urban locations. While urban locations were sufficiently acquainted with the digital world, rural areas were still gasping for entry. The fast expansion of mobiles and their benefit for digital consumption were the two major factors which accelerated the growth of OTT Market in india. From a wider perspective, the effect of OTT on rural and urban populations has been different. Almost 65 percent of OTT content consumption in India reaches from rural areas with only 40 percent internet link. It describes the degree of impact of regional language content on the inhabitants. In the country's urban areas, parallel cinema lovers have access to original international content, well above the limits of Indian cinema or commercial westerns. The high demand for off-beat reports has encouraged domestic talent to create and bring forth 'indie talent' at the fore. Catering to a huge and diverse market

like India needs some fine-tuning. The incessant cry for 'new content' and ever-increasing demand has prompted global players such as Amazon and Netflix to adjust their subscription fees as well.

According to **Cisco's VNI Mobile Forecast 2015-2020 report**[23], the mobile subscriber base in India surpassed that of the US by the end of 2015 and crossed the 239 million mark. The report also points out that 60% of internet users in India are using a mobile device to access the web. The findings of the report also suggest that video streaming is immensely popular with smartphone users in India.

LiveMint, (2016)[24] - In its article '*The Offline Gamble by online video streaming apps*' pointed out that to stream high-resolution videos, seamless internet connection is required which broadband can hardly provide on 3G & 4G networks. This is where the offline mode plays as one of the key drivers for audience engagement. The availability of offline mode allows users to find a way to overcome unstable internet, saves data usage while travelling when they do not have access to Wi-Fi facility. The addition of offline mode in OTT platforms like YouTube and Netflix was a smart way of making users stay on the platform even when their phone is not connected to the internet.

Deloitte, (2019)[25] - The Indian government has formed a committee to devise an effective roadmap for the deployment of 5G and the development of the next generation of broadband infrastructure. Because customers are increasingly seeking HD and good quality content, 5G is projected to open up opportunities for new media and entertainment product and service offerings.

RESEARCH GAP

The OTT industry is the new found form of entertainment and given the spread of internet and accessibility to the OTT platforms over different forms of devices, it becomes a prominent industry in making.

There have been several researches on various aspects of OTT but most of these studies have not encompassed all dimensions of the OTT industry. These studies have majorly tried to study the prospects of OTT industry in India but have ignored the factors influencing customers' preferences. The studies have also not investigated the customers' preferences regarding different OTT subscription modules and the factors affecting these choices.

The proposed study will encompass all aspects of the OTT industry and compare between the different subscriptions modules available for customers. It will delve into the depth of the factors influencing the Customers' preferences regarding OTT platforms and will present a wholesome picture of the OTT industry.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

- OTT and digital media are novel concepts to India and it has seen a tremendous rise over the years in which Covid-19 played a major role. The research done in this area is scant, leaving a wide scope of research to be done.
- It will help us understand the consumers' behaviour on OTT content i.e. consumption pattern of viewers of Ranchi District such as the duration that the consumers of Ranchi District spend on watching OTT content and which genre is most preferred by them.
- Increase in demand of online video content and increase in viewership lead to more profitability for OTT platforms, employment generation and overall growth of OTT industry. This study will enquire into these phenomena.
- Surge in viewership implies that viewers are spending more time in watching shows and movies. Continuous consumption of online video content of a particular genre can have positive or negative psychological effect in the mind of the viewers. This study will provide valuable insights about the mental health of the OTT viewers of Ranchi District.
- OTT platforms are based on distinct revenue models and each of them have their own sets of strengths and weaknesses. The profitability of any OTT platform is directly related to the market dynamics and demographic characteristics of any region in which an OTT platform operates. The ultimate goal of OTT service providers, as any other businessmen, is to generate maximum profit and the satisfaction of consumers through their services. The consumers can be satisfied and retained when the providers have complete knowledge about consumer's preference and expectation regarding the price and quality of content of any OTT platform and they adopt the model that suits that region in the best possible manner. This study will be an attempt to make a comparison among various revenue models from the perspective of online - content - consumers of Ranchi District, which will be a win-win situation for both viewers as well as OTT business.
- Most of the market forecasts show a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of more than 14% or more, which makes it an attractive avenue for investors to park their money and earn a good return. This study will be helpful in uncovering the factors influencing the growth of OTT industry and the opportunities linked therewith.
- This study will provide fresh insights into the factors viz. technology, network connectivity, government policy, content creation, consumers' preference, consumer segmentation, sources of funding, production-distribution-marketing budgeting growth prospects of OTT entertainment platforms.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is extended to understand the consumer's attitude and perception on online entertainment video content, to analyse the factors affecting their choice of OTT platforms, to critically analyse psychological effect of OTT on younger generation and to provide actionable insights and recommendations for the OTT companies to improve their offerings, and to provide an information database to facilitate further studies. Secondary data on various theories related to consumer buying behaviour will be studied. The area of research will be restricted to the urban population of Ranchi District. Since this is an academic study, sample size will be 200 for the primary data collection. It is assumed that OTT market is independent differentiated from traditional television services like cable, DTH and satellite service providers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To understand consumers' behaviour such as usage patterns, content consumption habits, satisfaction levels related to OTT platforms based on different revenue models in Ranchi district.
- To compare the impact of demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and educational level, on consumer preferences of OTT platforms based on different revenue models.
- To analyse and identify the drivers and barriers that affect consumer decision-making processes while choosing the type of OTT platforms in Ranchi district.
- To analyse the positive and negative psychological impact of online video content in the minds of viewers.
- To provide actionable insights and recommendations for OTT platform providers to improve their offerings and effectively cater to the preferences and needs of consumers in Ranchi district.

HYPOTHESES

$1H_0$ - Consumers in the Ranchi district exhibit a stronger preference for Subscription-based OTT platforms compared to other OTT models.

$1H_1$ - Consumers in the Ranchi district exhibit stronger preference for Ad-supported OTT models compared to Subscription-based OTT platforms.

$2H_0$ - Demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and educational level significantly influence consumer preferences and behaviours related to OTT subscription.

$2H_1$ - Demographic variables such as age, gender, income, and educational level do not have any significant influence on consumer preferences and behaviours related to OTT subscription.

$3H_0$ - OTT has more positive psychological effects than negative effects in the society.

$3H_1$ - OTT has more negative psychological effects than positive effects in the society.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

9.1 Research Design

A research design ensures that the obtained evidences effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. As the concept of OTT platform is new to the research world, exploratory research will be conducted for the preliminary investigation of OTT industry and the monetization models of OTT platforms that are not well understood or sufficiently researched. The exploratory research serves to establish a frame of reference and a hypothesis from which in-depth study can be developed that will enable the generation of conclusive results.

9.2 Research Methodology

Research Methodology is a logical, systematic, controlled, and detailed plan employed to design the structure of the research, collect, analyse, and interpret data in such a way that it gives valid, reliable, and rational results. Without a well-defined and detailed plan, obtaining accurate and reliable results and making meaningful and relevant conclusions can be difficult. It also helps to get familiar with basic details, to develop well-grounded picture of the situation, generation of new theories, etc[26]. Systematically planned research can help researchers who want to replicate the study or research further in that field by making information available and useful to them. The methodology design process helps researchers select the correct methods to achieve the objectives of the research. It allows researchers to document what they intend to achieve with the research from the outset.

9.2.1 Data Collection Method

As the sources of information, primary as well as secondary sources of data will be used.

Primary data collection - The focus of this study will be on collecting the primary data, directly from the source. For this study, the primary source of data will be the OTT content consumers of

Ranchi District, segregated based on interest, preferences, and demographic characteristics. Primary data will be collected by conducting survey through questionnaires. The questionnaire will include closed ended as well as open ended questions.

The sample size will be 400. The total population for the study i.e. OTT viewers of Ranchi District will be classified based on demographic characteristics, income, age and educational background of the consumers and data will be collected through *stratified sampling method*.

Secondary data collection - It will be collected from magazines, newspapers, books, publicly available data, past research studies, business documents, technical and trade journals, and internet.

Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to delve into the phenomena.

9.3 Analysis & Interpretation

Various mathematical, statistical, and computer-aided tools will be used to collect, collate and analyse the data pertaining to Consumer Buying behavior in regard to OTT. Consumers' behaviour will be analysed based on the responses of the questionnaire. All the OTT video platforms will be categorized and compared based on their revenue models. Various statistical tools will be used for analysis such as percentage, average, standard deviation, regression, factor analysis etc. Hypothesis will be tested using appropriate tests such as chi-aquare test, ANOVA for variance analysis and inferences will be drawn. Some techniques that will be used for hypothesis testing include If the null hypothesis is rejected, the alternative hypothesis will be accepted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Primary data will be collected through a convenience sampling method from select regions of Ranchi district, hence, the sample may not be sufficient to generalize it to the whole nation.
- Due to the concept's novelty, there is a possibility of inadequacy of secondary data available on the given research topic.
- Samples will be collected at the convenience of the researcher and may limit the results of this study.

TENTATIVE CHAPTERIZATION

The complete study will be presented in a structured format in the proposed chapters as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction, Literature Review & Research Design

Chapter II: Regulatory Framework Regarding Consumer Rights and OTT Platform

Chapter III: An Overview of OTT Industry in India viz a viz Ranchi District

Chapter IV: Data Analysis, Hypothesis Testing & Interpretation

Chapter V: Conclusion, Findings & Suggestions

Annexures and References

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